



# The Object of Alcibiades' Love

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## I. Pursuing a Double Love

Plato is a notoriously slippery author, but I do not blame his own obscurity for making him particularly elusive on the subject of aesthetics. Rather, there is something tricky and almost incoherent in the Greek approach to value. A great range of things was deemed to have aesthetic value, usually defying our ability to find any coherent linking thread. There were certain types of things that time and again are numbered among *kala*, among fine or beautiful things. Among them are attractive animate and inanimate bodies, objects well adapted to their roles, personal character and qualities of character, laws and customs, and knowledge. Much has to do with whatever it is that has the potential to *inspire* us, and whatever it may be that has the potential to lead us to those sources of inspiration.

It is regularly assumed that physical beauty in a fellow human being is among those things that can have this inspiring effect, and that an erotic response to such physical beauty is not strictly separable from one's inner sense of inspiration from it. Similarly, ancient authors often speak of an erotic response to things that are quite abstract, such as Pericles' ideals of the democratic city.<sup>1</sup> These ideals are founded in the myth of the tyrannicide lovers, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, whose democratic aspirations were inseparably bound up with their aspirations to be each other's.<sup>2</sup> A deep attraction to the beauty of another human being goes hand in hand with a deep attraction to some still greater *public* beauty. Hence inspiring relationships with another person were seldom thought to have no beneficial effects, for the love of beauty emerged in other far more valuable ways. Love of visual beauty can, and no doubt should,





have some ulterior noble purpose. It may be difficult to appreciate how, but *somehow* the two are linked.

The *Symposium* explores this link at many levels, linking pursuit of a relationship with pursuit of excellence, pursuit of beauty with the opportunity to foster what is good through 'creation in the beautiful', and pursuit of various types of beauty with the composition of beautiful *logoi*.<sup>3</sup> But things do not stop there. The *Gorgias*, for instance, speaks in the same breath about Socrates' love for philosophy and his love for Alcibiades (*Gorg.* 481d)—as well as Calicles' love for Demos son of Pyrilampes and his love of the democratic body of Athens. Why are Plato's characters being credited with having *two consuming passions* simultaneously? Does this not detract from the degree that one may be committed to either? So are the Greeks just weaving an intricate web of justification for homoerotic relationships that they could not ask approval for without their being seen to result in other noble passions? Or are they rather on the threshold of appreciating something critically important about the nature of human desire? Rather than attempt to tackle the mysteries and complexities of the *Symposium* in a short space, I have chosen to examine the connection between a loving relationship and higher, more public ambitions in the *First Alcibiades*.

## II. Explaining Socrates' Love for Alcibiades

The *First Alcibiades*, hereafter called simply *Alcibiades*, is a work that sets out to document and explain a moment that is important to what we term the 'myth-cycle' of Socrates. That moment is the philosophic seduction of Alcibiades by which he comes to reciprocate Socrates' *erôs*. This reciprocation is known in the ancient commentators on the work as *anterôs*. I prefer to speak of the original desire as *erôs* rather than as 'love', since we are speaking now of a powerful erotic attraction that drives, or attempts to drive, the lover into a relationship. It is usually accepted, at least within the Platonic corpus, that this erotic desire is wholly or partly inspired by one's detection of beauty within the beloved, whether it belongs to the body, the inner person or 'soul', or the intellect.

In documenting Alcibiades' transition from disdain for all lovers





to *anterôs*, starting with the first words that the obsessed Socrates will address to the young man and concluding with the announcement of a philosophic relationship, the dialogue agrees much better than most with Aristotle's requirement of a tragedy at the beginning of chapter 7 of the *Poetics*:<sup>4</sup> that it should depict events of a certain magnitude, and that it should be complete in the sense of having a definite beginning, middle, and end. If I am right in my supposition that the ancient commentators have the key to the correct text and interpretation of a vital passage at 133c, then there is also a climax at which the real transition takes place. And in Aristotelian terms this could be called a *peripateia*.

I offer no guarantees about the authenticity of the *Alcibiades*, which is today hotly contested. In fact, in spite of some serious defenders such as Annas (1985) and Denyer (2001), I tend to assume that at least some of the dialogue,<sup>5</sup> and perhaps all, is not written by Plato himself. To me, this is no great problem as long as the work stems from Plato's school in the first couple of generations after his death. Furthermore, one of the reasons why I see an imitator at work here is that the *Alcibiades* strives to situate itself firmly in the world of Platonic literature, whereas for Plato himself the need was rather to situate similar dialogues within the oral traditions of Socratic legend.<sup>6</sup> The use of Platonic material from other dialogues is obvious on virtually every page, and the work repays careful study whether or not one believes that one is reading the words of the master. Because it is neither without interest nor beyond the boundaries of Platonism, the work promises—when correctly understood—to assist us with an understanding of the master himself.

At first glance, it is scarcely difficult to appreciate why Socrates at the beginning of the dialogue is pursuing the youthful Alcibiades. The *Charmides* (154b-c) had spoken of his finding just about all youths in their prime beautiful (and hence attractive), and about the profound effect that great beauty could have upon him (cf. 155d-e). The *Alcibiades* lists Alcibiades' various attractions, giving pride of place to his outstanding beauty and height (104a-b), but considering also the nobility, power and wealth of his family. Socrates is certainly supposed to be attracted to this physical beauty, but the work will argue strongly that he (unlike others) has been attracted





rather to Alcibiades' true self, that is to say to his inner self or soul (131c-e). Briefly, Alcibiades' physical attributes are things that he possesses, not the real Alcibiades, therefore the lovers who crave for his body are in love not with him, but with *what belongs to him*. And since his body is already passing its prime, its lovers have also lost their enthusiasm. Only Socrates, with his keen interest in the inner Alcibiades, has stayed the course, thinking that only now is his real beauty coming to fruition.

It is with this claim to be attracted to the inner Alcibiades that we encounter difficulties. What is it that Socrates finds here to be attracted to? He would not deny that he is impressed with the young man's outward beauty of which he has plenty of evidence. But what evidence of his psychical qualities has he discovered by this stage? He has been observing Alcibiades for quite some time, but has never addressed a word to him, and the main thing that he had observed was Alcibiades' haughty attitude to his lovers (103b-104c).<sup>7</sup> He is even at the receiving end of this at 104d. But he has no experience of the youth's *philosophic* skills, and nothing in the dialogue leads us to believe that any such skills had yet flourished.

If Socrates had been working with a theory of inherited excellence, which certainly does not accord well with other evidence for the Platonic Socrates, then Alcibiades might have seemed to offer all the necessary attractions. But the *Alcibiades* itself does not allow us to resort to this explanation. Socrates is indeed well aware that the object of his attentions comes from a good family, but he suffers from no illusions that this family could be a guarantee of qualities of mind or of character, as may easily be seen from 118e: his kinsman on his mother's side, Pericles, was the greatest family member, but managed to produce two simpletons for sons, while his brother Cleinias was crazy. If it were an aristocratic background that he was attracted to then he might equally have been pursuing Cleinias! So why is he so impressed with the *soul and inner self* of this rather unimpressive character? Frankly, it is difficult to see how he could consider Alcibiades admirable at all, seeing that he diagnoses him with the very worst kind of ignorance (118b4-7). And to lack knowledge had for Socrates regularly implied a lack of excellence too. What then does Socrates see in this highly controversial figure?





It may be part of the answer to observe that Alcibiades has *potential* both for good and for evil. In fact Alcibiades has an amazing amount of potential for both. But potential has no aesthetic quality in its own right. It may very well be that Socrates has special ability for ensuring that such potential is used for the better, but he certainly has no confidence that he can counter the corrupting influence of the democratic masses. Examine the following passage:

*SOC: This then is the reason [why I only approach you when others have stopped] that I alone was your lover, while the rest [were lovers] of your assets. Your assets are losing their prime, while you are just beginning to blossom. And now, unless you are ruined by the Athenian demos and turn out uglier, I shall never abandon you. It's this, you see, that I'm particularly fearful of, that by becoming a demos-lover you'll be ruined as far as we are concerned. (131e10-132a3)*

Socrates' fears are quite explicit (and prophetic), as also at the end of the dialogue:

*SOC: But I am afraid that the city will overpower you and me, not because I doubt your natural ability at all, but because I can see the city's strength.*

Clearly Alcibiades' potential is recognised, but that potential resides in his inner self which is only now *beginning* to shine, and its development is threatened by the very system of government under which he lives. His inner self is clearly starting to show some beauty, as suggested by the verb 'blossom' (*anthein*), and therefore to attract Socrates, but it also has the potential to turn 'ugly'. According to this argument, there is a trace of beauty within that alerts one to the beauty that could yet come about, but as far as psychical attractions are concerned Alcibiades is not a ravishing young man. We have still failed to explain fully Socrates' erotic feelings towards him.

Let us therefore consider the matter in another way. What quality does Alcibiades clearly show at the beginning of the dialogue? The simple answer is ambition. Socrates declares that he would not be troubling if he thought that Alcibiades would be content with the advantages that he already possessed, so it is somehow crucial that Alcibiades wants his influence to grow and grow. His ambitions are on an imperial scale, and





he wants fame without limit (104e-105c).<sup>8</sup> Socrates declares that he in turn hopes for huge influence *by his control of the young man*, because his assistance is essential if Alcibiades is to achieve his goal. So Socrates, like Alcibiades, is in fact aiming for power (*megiston dynêsesthai*, 105e3; *dynamis*, 105e5).<sup>9</sup> If all this is serious (and one might suspect that it is modelled on the relationship between Aristotle and Alexander),<sup>10</sup> then both of them have a public goal that is far more important than enjoying a genuine private relationship. It seems that their private relationship is second to their expectation of power, but power will only come through each other.<sup>11</sup> This impression, as we shall discover, is potentially misleading in the case of Socrates,<sup>12</sup> but accurate enough as far as the ambitious young Alcibiades is concerned.

Insatiable ambition is not usually considered an attractive inner quality today, and put in this way it would not always have been welcomed in ancient Greece. But the Greek word for the driving force behind the young Alcibiades is *philotimia*, which, while regularly used for a high level of ambition, means literally a love of honour. Such ambition was always seen in a positive light in Homer, the most influential author in ancient Greece, and only with great reluctance were values espoused by Homer surrendered in the centuries that followed him. So there remains a tendency to look upon seemingly excessive ambition as a noble aspiration rather than as a disgraceful lust for power. Furthermore, *philotimia* is a sign that one is driven by a powerful desire to win approval—that one cares at the very least that one should appear to be of a praiseworthy character. The *philotimos* (honour-loving man) will do everything in his power to avoid being subjected to disgraceful criticisms by his fellows. During our dialogue Alcibiades is as embarrassed as any at the charges of woeful ignorance and premature political activity that are levelled against him. This is why he commits so readily (some might say meekly) to Socrates' plans for his further education. So Socrates, knowing that Alcibiades is a *philotimos*, knows also that he will have the tools to shame him into developing the skills that will put his ambitions to the best possible use—if only the adulation of the masses does not outweigh the criticisms of the one intelligent advisor.





To what extent do Alcibiades' responses demonstrate his susceptibility to being shamed into agreement and a change of course? A great many responses are brief and unrevealing, but by 116e2-4 he is obviously less self-assured. There are no great protests at the suggestion that he suffers from damning ignorance, but he tries to cling to the idea that, through Pericles, he has access to the chain of wisdom that Pericles derives from his intellectual contacts, until Socrates is able to show that Pericles has not been able to hand down this wisdom to any others (118c-9a). Alcibiades is by now prepared to examine along with Socrates what it is that he should do about his shortcomings (119b), but he takes comfort of a different kind from the inferiority of other politicians with whom he will have to contend. Socrates eventually persuades him that his real opponents are to be found in other states, and that Spartan and Persian kings have a number of advantages over his own natural and acquired talents. Only at 124b is he convinced that he needs to acquire further skills to achieve the success he desires. At first Socrates puts the onus upon him to discover what it is that he must practice, but further questioning leads him into further recognition of his own inability to offer conclusive answers:

*ALC: Heavens no, Socrates, I don't even know what I mean myself, and perhaps I have long been failing to notice that I'm in a most disgraceful state (aischista echôn). (127d6-8)*

This is the first admission by Alcibiades that his condition is a shameful one, and, having shamed him, Socrates has to offer some words of encouragement: at least Alcibiades has recognised soon enough. Alcibiades' dependence on Socrates' lead is now more obvious as the conversation is diverted back to the key idea of self-knowledge, and the nature of the self that we must try to discover. Alcibiades' cooperation is now assured for the rest of the dialogue. It is not that his shame had been repeatedly demonstrated, but rather that, once it fully emerges, his resistance to the guidance of philosophy (as opposed to his own preconceived ideas) is over.

So we should perhaps allow that Socrates was able to depend on Alcibiades' aspirations to sharpen his sense of shame at exposure through





elenchus, and so offer some hope that he would respond to Socratic guidance. Not only did Alcibiades have outstanding potential, he also had aspirations that ensured his pursuit of what was honourable and attractive in preference to what was disgraceful and repellent. There was just a little beauty beginning to grow in the inner Alcibiades, scarcely enough to warrant great devotion from others, but enough to warrant it from one with similarly high aspirations who believed that Alcibiades was the key to realising them.

### III. Explaining Alcibiades' Love for Socrates

Socrates' unappealing physical features are well known, and there can be no suggestion that Alcibiades saw in him anything to attract him physically. We can rule out any idea that he had seen him as *in any way* attractive before this conversation, since the disdain he felt for his many suitors had been universal: he thought he needed no person for any purpose (104a1-2). Any attraction towards Socrates had to be explained in different terms, and as an attraction to something that only becomes evident to him during this conversation. There lies another puzzle, since, for most readers, there are several more attractive depictions of Socrates within the Platonic corpus than this one. As often, there is an appearance of moral expertise that appears largely through the deftness with which he handles moral argument, and this is balanced by the common idea that he himself is in need of the same studies that interlocutors are (124c1-e1, 127e5-129b3, 131b). So what is revealed here that is *special* about Socrates' inner self?

It is here that the ancient commentator Olympiodorus may help. He finds at 133c, seemingly a climactic point where ancient texts had significantly different readings, an invitation from Socrates to Alcibiades.<sup>13</sup> Such an invitation is not easily read into our texts, but seems to have been clearly implied in Neoplatonic ones. The young man is asked to gaze into his lover's inner person, where he will find images of the gods. This is a direct allusion to the strange content that the Alcibiades of the *Symposium* (215b3, cf. 216e) finds within Socrates when he is 'opened up' like Silenus-figures of a particular type: particularly those of Marsyas. There







inside Socrates he had found good sense (*sôphrosynê*) and arguments that contained within 'very many images of excellence' (*pleista agalmat' aretês*, 222a4). So, for Olympiodorus, it is the inner beauty that the *Symposium's* Alcibiades has seen within Socrates and his arguments that is what is now winning the young man over to his love in the *Alcibiades*. The author's general tactic of setting the work firmly in the traditions of Platonic literature, with plausible allusions to numerous other dialogues, makes Olympiodorus' general interpretation seem quite plausible. Alcibiades is most likely to be finding something that is supposed to be hidden beneath the unattractive exterior of Socrates' body and arguments alike.

There is no doubt that the *Symposium* is blaming Alcibiades' vision into the interior of Socrates for almost reversing the normal role of lover and beloved: after adopting the guise of the lover, Socrates is transformed into something more like the object of love (222b3-4). Being akin to a drama in which Alcibiades comes to return Socrates' love, the *Alcibiades* might almost be expected to offer an explanation of *anterôs* that accorded with the *Symposium*. There will be sources of inspiration that are discovered deep within Socrates' soul and within his arguments. At 133b we learn that, just as an eye, in order to discover itself, must look into another eye, and into the very part where an eye's excellence, vision, is to be found, so one soul, if it is to know itself, should look into another soul, and particularly at that part—the mind—in which the soul's excellence, wisdom, is found. Now the person who most lacks self-knowledge is Alcibiades himself, and hence there is a strong implication that he should examine the interior of another soul (and no doubt Socrates will be delighted if it is *his own* soul that Alcibiades chooses) for the purpose of seeing his own true self in a kind of mirror (cf. 132e2).

It seems obvious that it is above all Socrates' mind, the sharpest mind of its era, that Alcibiades should be looking into, but 133c1-2 introduces another twist by asking whether there is anything more divine (*theios*) within us than the faculty concerned with knowledge and wisdom. A negative response brings the observation that this faculty of the soul is like god (or like *its* god),<sup>14</sup> and it is here that one should reflect upon Socrates' having regularly called the power that controls his divine sign





(*daimonion*) a god (*theos*) – in this work above all others.<sup>15</sup> Socrates' soul seems to have within it a prophetic element that is certainly 'like a god'. A variety of readings could be held to hint at a divine resemblance that is *particularly* true of Socrates' soul, in which the divine element seems to be especially in control. That would agree well with the notion of something like 'images of the gods' being present in Socrates' soul that we find in the *Symposium*.

The philology of all this is extraordinarily difficult, but it is quite possible that for the Neoplatonists, with a different text to which they were committed, it had been plain enough. Socrates is inviting Alcibiades to look into his soul, and to find within it both intellect *and* a god. Their relationship will flourish 'if the god is willing' (135d6).

On this reading there is no mystery about what it is that Alcibiades finds beautiful in Socrates. Yet the only reason that he is observing Socrates to begin with is that he is led to believe that this unexpected inner beauty is an image of the beauty that resides in his own innermost self. And the only reason that he is now committed to self-discovery is that he has been shown that self-knowledge is vital for his enormous political ambitions to be realised. His new source of inspiration in a personal friend goes hand in hand with that earlier source of inspiration that he has shown no signs of giving up permanently. He now recognises the need for internal excellence if he is to pass excellence on to the city, and the path to achieving that excellence will be far easier with the help of one whose soul can provide a paradigm of excellence. The beauty of the goals that one hopes to achieve necessitates the creation of a beauty within; and for the creation of this inner beauty one needs, and feels the need of, the guidance of one who can provide us with a model of the beauty that we are to re-establish in ourselves.

#### IV. Twin Objects of Erotic Attraction

Plato's puzzling insistence elsewhere that the person whom we think we love is not the sole, or even the most important, object of our desire seems to be clearly at work in the *Alcibiades*. That is not to say that there is an exact duplication of doctrine from, say, the *Lysis* (219c-222a) or the





*Symposium*. But Socrates and Alcibiades would not be brought together were it not for the fact that both of them are aiming at goals that seem extremely high on the scale of beauty or attractiveness. Alcibiades wants empire, and to most of those who have not lived in a post-colonialist age empire has seemed a glorious thing. Socrates, with a level of seriousness that is hard to read, seeks the same level of power, but through his control over Alcibiades that comes about from his having a unique ability to allow the young man to succeed.

If Socrates were simply aiming at power *as conventionally conceived* (and as even now conceived by Alcibiades) one would be wondering what kind of Platonism this is, since the 'Socrates' of the *Gorgias* (466b-468e) is adamant that only power to act justly and do good is really power at all. Whatever Socrates is aiming at, one feels, he must be aiming at something that he considers to be good; if he wants control, then he must want *wise* control within the confines of the various virtues. The dialogue strongly suggests this, as Socrates is so careful to direct Alcibiades towards fair and sensible behaviour at the close (133c-135c), and we may note in particular 135b3-5:

SOC: *So one should not deliver a tyranny, my good Alcibiades, either to oneself or to the city, if one is going to be happy (eudaimôn), but excellence (aretê).*

As far as Socrates is concerned, Alcibiades' real goal cannot be realised apart from excellence, both public and private. This might perhaps have been anticipated at 105e4-5:

*Nor is anybody else up to delivering the power that you desire, but I alone am — with the god's blessing though.*

This is clearly a reference to the very god that has stopped Socrates so much as speaking to Alcibiades up until this moment (d5, e7), and the providential nature of this controller of the divine sign is consistently assumed. There are clear constraints on Socrates' *private* ability to influence Alcibiades, for any influence other than influence for the good will be denied. That simply means that what Socrates is aiming at in seeking to control Alcibiades is *power to achieve the good*. And Socrates at least is





aware that his higher love is good. Hence the *Gorgias* can have him speak of his two loves, Alcibiades who vacillates in his beliefs and philosophy which always adheres to the same moral views (482a-b). The voice of philosophy there may not be unrelated to the 'daemonic impediment' (103a) of the *Alcibiades*.

So Socrates is inspired by noble ideals that inevitably conform with goodness, and thus becomes inspired by Alcibiades; Alcibiades is inspired by noble ideals whose connection with goodness he is unable to properly comprehend. Their high ideals make them prone to act as lovers and to feel erotic attraction to whoever is able to 'make their dreams come true'. And that 'making dreams come true' is in fact creative activity. As with all truly creative activity, it involves the creation of something beautiful and well-ordered, whether physical children, poems, scientific discoveries, or law codes.<sup>16</sup> Only in the presence of beauty, whether physical or psychical, can one's ability to create such beauty and order come to fruition and overflow.<sup>17</sup> So it does matter that Socrates feels the power of Alcibiades' beauty, particularly those first glimmers of inner beauty that are now bursting forth. And it matters intensely that Alcibiades should see the inner beauty that not only accompanies Socrates but even directs whatever he is doing. Socrates and Alcibiades come to each other already inspired by beautiful goals, but it is through the recognition of each other's beauty that their creative powers will be unleashed and they will be empowered to advance towards a common end.

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## Notes

- 1 See Th. 2.43.1: *mallon tên tēs poleōs dunamin kath' hēmeran ergōi theōmenous kai erastas gignomenous autēs ...*
- 2 See here Wohl (1999) where most of her ideas that have clear relevance to this paper are already to be found; these ideas were reworked and expanded in her (2003).
- 3 The first link is conventional, but associated in particular with Pausanias' speech (184c3-185c2); the second is a central plank of the philosophy of Erōs attributed by Socrates to Diotima (206b7-e5); the third is a recurrent feature of the 'Ascent to the Beautiful' (210a6-8, b6-c3, d3-6). The adjective *kalos* is in the first case and the last associated not only with the source of inspiration but also with the *logoi* that are its result (a8, d5), while its absence in the second results from the fact that the person loved here may have little *physical* beauty as opposed to attractive character (b8), so that the resultant *logoi* turn out to be morally improving rather than superficially attractive.
- 4 I am here grateful to Ian Drummond, who wrote a paper for my University of Toronto seminar on the *Alcibiades* in which he assessed how 'dramatic' it was using Aristotle's conception of drama.
- 5 Pamela Clark (1955) is the first scholar known to me to have proposed a theory of partial authenticity, and that is to be distinguished from Holger Thesleff's (1982) theory of 'semi-authenticity' that is applied to many shorter dialogues in the corpus. Neither of these theories appeals greatly to me in this case. Recent computer-assisted studies of the working vocabulary of 'Socratic' dialogues, carried out with the assistance of grants from the University of Newcastle and the Australian Research Council, have demonstrated to me that the work is fairly consistent in its vocabulary mix and barely compatible with universally accepted Platonic dialogues; it is usually closer, but not very close, to the other dialogues of tetralogy IV.
- 6 The most obvious example of this is to be found in the openings of the *Symposium*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Parmenides*.
- 7 Note *hyperblētheis tōi phronēmati* at 103b5, *hyperpephronēkas* at 104a1, *mega phronein* at c2, and *megalauchoumenos* at c3 for the arrogance.
- 8 There is an emphasis on crossing into Asia (105c1), and it is implied that Alcibiades is using Cyrus (the Great) and Xerxes as models. Later, at 121a-122a and 123b-e the credentials of the Persian kings are idealised in greater detail.
- 9 It may be significant that the only cases in this dialogue where the term *dynamis* occurs in the sense of (political) power are 104b4, 105c4, d4, and e5; there is also a suggestive use applied to Socrates' divine sign at 103a6, for that presumably needs to allow Socrates to exercise his *dynamis* over Alcibiades.
- 10 The change that came over the interlocutor's political ideals with a new political order is reflected not only in this dialogue, but also in the *Theages* (125e-126a) and the *Alcibiades II* (141a-c), both of them still more serious contenders for the label 'Pseudo-Platonic'. Attempts have previously been made to link the idea of world domination in dialogues of doubtful authenticity with Alexander. For discussion see Bailly (2004), 183-5, who is circumspect on this tricky matter. Even so, nothing is quite as able to explain young men's fanciful desire for universal tyranny, if not actual elevation to the ranks of the gods, as Alexander's youthful rise to supreme power and supernatural honour.
- 11 It is worth noting that power-relationships between intellectual and potentate are also highlighted in *Epistle II* (particularly 310e5), also of very doubtful authenticity.
- 12 One should not see Socrates as aiming simply at the rather ugly image of chief advisor to a universal potentate; this sounds neither like Socrates the lover, infatuated by the beauty of his





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beloved, nor like Socrates the philosopher, who is well able to distinguish real power from its empty political images (*Gorgias* 466b).

- 13 Olymp. in *Alc.* 271.12-16; for further details see H. Tarrant, 'Olympiodorus and Proclus on the Climax of the *Alcibiades*', *International Journal for the Platonic Tradition* 1 (2007), 3-29.
- 14 I much prefer 'god' (*theôî*) to 'divine' (*theiôî*), along with the slightly superior manuscript B; the precise meaning of 'is like' determines the way we read 'god' (whether 'has a role in it similar to a god's', or 'has a role in it similar to god's role in the universe').
- 15 105d5/e5, 124c8, 127e6.
- 16 See *Symposium* 209a-e.
- 17 See *Symposium* 206c-e.